Voice

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Community members worked to ensure kids had the tools they need during Greater Twin Cities United Way’s Action Day event in August. Catholic Charities received hundreds of backpacks filled with school supplies as well as 160 learning kits and 200 snack packs!

Speaking of new beginnings, we are also delighted to be expanding our School Based Counseling work into DeLaSalle High School. Go Islanders! May you and all students win a gold medal this year!

Laurie Ollmann
Senior Vice President of Client Services and Community Partnerships

Changing seasons bring new opportunities

No one at Catholic Charities is ready to give up summer yet, but with the Rio Olympics in the rear view mirror and school buses rumbling about, I can’t help but reflect on the potential for “gold” all around us.

I was inspired by Yiech Pur Biel, a South Sudanese member of the first ever Refugee Olympic Team who began playing sports in the refugee camp for a sense of belonging. He didn’t medal yet he did indeed achieve his goal of helping the world see that refugees “are human beings like other people.”

Here at home, Catholic Charities has supported 317 refugees this past year, helping them initiate their dreams in Minnesota. We are grateful for all the support provided by our volunteers and the community as we help these families get established as our neighbors, fellow employees, and new classmates.

POVERTY FOR NO ONE. OPPORTUNITY FOR EVERYONE.

As the school year begins and children strap on their backpacks, Catholic Charities marks its thirtieth year of providing counseling services in metro schools.

With your support, our clinical social workers are able to provide services to ensure children can attend and be successful in school. They’re able to help children develop the necessary skills to cope with adversity, and ensure they live in a safe home environment with the family’s basic needs being met.

The outcome? Children who are more ready to learn and build strong educational foundations for future success.

At its inception, the School Based Counseling Program was one woman, Jodi Flak, going to one school. Now, Flak leads a team of seven clinical social workers serving at Northside Child Development Center and eight schools across the metro area, including our newest partnership with DeLaSalle High School in Minneapolis.

“It’s a real privilege to do this kind of work,” Flak said. “That people let you into their hearts and their pain—it’s really a privilege.”

The clinical social workers are seen by students as simply another adult in the school, a constant presence for the students. Any student may visit with them, regardless of income.

“This is what I was meant to do,” Flak said. “I’m so grateful I have been able to do this work.”

Brice is doing everything right.

The 36-year-old Navy vet is working two jobs—studying and planning for the future. He spends his nights sleeping in the Pay-for-Stay Shelter at Higher Ground in Saint Paul and his days working toward achieving a goal.

With your help, he has made great strides toward his future.

“Catholic Charities has provided a place for me to lay my head every night, has given me good food, a computer lab where I can get my schoolwork done and a place where I can shower and share every night,” he said.

A recent graduate of Metropolitan State University, Brice now attends Metropolitan State University, completing the next stage of his journey to become a police officer.

“I’ve wanted to be a cop ever since I was in high school. Going to be a police officer with the nation on edge, that’s tough. But, if I can deal with being in a homeless shelter I can deal with being a police officer. I don’t want to get up in the morning doing the same thing day in and day out. I don’t want to lose touch with reality.”

Meet Brice

POVERTY FOR NO ONE. OPPORTUNITY FOR EVERYONE.

Our newest school-based counseling program at DeLaSalle High School is one of many ways Catholic Charities is engaged in the classroom.

Brice is a Navy vet, college student, future police officer

“...I know I’m going to be a good cop. I try to be objective. I don’t like to take sides on anything. Before I judge someone, I try to get to know them first.” —Brice
Catholic Charities helped me, housed me, fed me, gave me opportunities to help myself. It’s been a real resource,” he said. “It feels good to carry a feather, rather than a burden.”

When Edna is asked to describe Catholic Charities’ Family Service Center, she says “it’s a place where you always have someone to talk to and you’ve never alone.”

“Since I got here, I have support,” she said. Edna and her 17- and 10-year-old daughters have been staying in a room at Family Service Center. With a strong work history and good skills, Edna said she is confident she can find a job—but her first priority is to find a place for them all to live and someone to take care of her girls when she goes to work.

“My goals are to keep stable housing and daycare so my kids’ lives will never be disrupted again,” she said.

With your support, Family Service Center is able to give Edna, and others staying there, the tools they need to regain housing and independence while offering support and fulfilling immediate needs.

“A right direction, indeed. I have a lot to be thankful for.”

“It sets the stage for taking off in the right direction. I can have a lot to be thankful for.”

“It’s going to take time; I’ll just save my paychecks. If I’m able to get up and go to work, then I can get a normal residence,” he said. “It feels good to carry a feather, rather than a burden.”

“Catholic Charities helped me, housed me, fed me, gave me opportunities to help myself. It’s been a real resource.” —Darryl

When the class ended, Darryl completed his two-week internship at a popular St. Paul restaurant. He’ll be making hamburgers and training for an assistant manager position there.

“We can do more!”

“Family Service Center has helped me a lot,” Edna said. “They provide food, room and board. If you have a question about something, the staff here helps in any way they can. The volunteers are so helpful, knocking on our doors with activities for the kids and the staff is my support system.”

It’s obvious talking to Edna, her girls are her priority in life.

“Xavionynya, my 10-year-old, all she does all day is read and put her face in a book. Blissness goes with the flow and likes to make new friends. Jeryhia, she’s standoffish until she’s very comfortable. She’s smart too, she dances and she sings. They all like to be outside,” Edna said.

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Cooking is part of Darryl’s soul, a skill he learned in his grandmother’s kitchen and fine-tuned with working with Chef Mary at Opportunity Center. While he had breakfast at his favorite, he said food isn’t about the product, but the joy it brings.

“If I cook something and you enjoy it, that’s the satisfaction I get out of it,” he said.

Crossing the river from St. Paul to attend the class every day in Minneapolis wasn’t easy for Darryl, but he said it was worth it. He earned a diploma for completing the class and also earned a ServSafe certificate for food handling.

Darryl is looking forward to leaving Dorothy Day Center and moving into a place of his own.

“It’s going to take time, I’ll just save my paychecks. If I’m able to get up and go to work, then I can get a normal residence,” he said. “It feels good to carry a feather, rather than a burden.”

“I hope to get them into a stable environment so they can get back to exploring, arts and crafts and get back to having a life again.”

While her girls are still young, Edna is already thinking about when they can go to college—she hopes she’s financially able to help pay for it.

Until then, she’s teaching the girls everything she knows and imagining the adventures they will enjoy in life.
“Catholic Charities helped me, housed me, fed me, gave me opportunities to help myself. It's been a real resource,” he said.

Like Darryl, students are learning the culinary and interpersonal skills they need to succeed in the food service industry. They learn the fundamentals in the classroom and also earn a ServSafe certificate for food handling.

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“Enjoy taking time, I’d just save my paycheck. If I’m able to get up and go to work, then I can get a normal residence,” he said.

The Culinary Skills Training Program at Catholic Charities provides students with workplace readiness classes and empowerment workshops. The class is capped off with a two-week unpaid internship at a local eatery.

The Culinary Skills Training Program has been going strong in Minneapolis since 2011. With your help, we will bring opportunities like this to St. Paul as we realize the new vision for Dorothy Day Center.

They’re not only learning about cooking basics and proper food handling, they’re learning job skills with workplace readiness classes and empowerment workshops. The class is capped off with a two-week unpaid internship at a local eatery.

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Higher Ground Saint Paul under construction

Last August, many of our clients sat on the curb and watched as we tore down the old lab building at 411 Main Street in downtown St. Paul to make way for Higher Ground Saint Paul, Phase I of the new vision for Dorothy Day Center.

Shortly after you receive your next issue of Voice, many of those same clients will be moving off of the mats on the floor of Catholic Charities’ Dorothy Day Center and into Higher Ground Saint Paul.

Planned gifts can be made in cash, real estate, stocks, bonds, personal property or life insurance and some can even provide an income for you and your loved ones while also supporting Catholic Charities.

No matter how you make your gift, you’ll be leaving your mark and making an immeasurable impact on our community for years to come.

For more information please contact Stacy McVary at 651-294-9371 or stacy.mcvary@catholiccharities.org

Planned gifts are an important part of Catholic Charities’ overall fund-raising strategy. With your support and your voice, we are creating true pathways out of poverty for those most vulnerable in our community, this new vision is already providing hope to the hundreds of men and women who have no place else to turn.

We are confident that we will obtain both the public and private resources necessary to advance the project, despite the lack of a state capital bonding bill for this year.

Please stay tuned for information! With your support and your voice, we are creating true pathways out of poverty for those in need.

TO BECOME A VOLUNTEER, VISIT CCTWINCITIES.ORG/VOLUNTEER

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CATHOLIC CHARITIES SERVES THOSE MOST IN NEED.
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Chair, Board of Directors
Kathleen M. Cooney
President & Chief Executive Officer
Tim Marx
cctwincities.org

### Catholic Charities heads back to the classroom

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